ABSTRACT
        This literature review argues that the broader
implications of social learning by a subordinate group through the
cultural apparatus of the dominant group has not usually been made an
explicit part of the theoretical perspectives utilized in studies of
minorities' experiences concerning the impact of television. The
review presents the principal components of a comprehensive approach
to studying the impact of the mass media. The paper identifies
conceptual points of entry and then discusses the representations of
Blacks and Hispanics in the context of the changing media
environments which produce them and examines the evidence of media
effects in the context of socially generated individual and group
differences. The paper concludes that the research literature on
Hispanic and African-American orientations to mass media in general,
and to television in particular, provides only a partial inventory of
differences, and a bare minimum of understanding about those factors
which produce them. Suggestions are presented for future research.
(One hundred and forty-three references are appended.) (MS)

TELEVISION AND ITS INFLUENCE
AMONG
AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND HISPANICS*

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TELEVISION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BLACKS AND HISPANICS

INTRODUCTION

Stimulated by the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement and the rise in urban violence, social scientists took on the challenge of investigating the impact of television on viewers' values, belief systems and perceptions of social reality. The application of energies to the experiences of minorities was sparse and problematic. Generally, the study of minorities focused on television's impact on racial attitudes, self-esteem, and to a lesser extent, self-concept (Graves, 1975; Stroman, 1984, 1986). The broader implications of social learning by a subordinate group through the cultural apparatus of the dominant group was usually not made an explicit part of the theoretical perspectives utilized in these studies. Very often researchers considered the integrative role of television as a positive achievement of its social role of providing "the ethos of the social order" in which it operates . The assimilation of subordinate groups has been viewed as a desirable process in the forging of "civil society."

Influences on viewers have been characterized as direct and indirect effects. Modes for theorizing and testing propositions about the nature of these effects have raised as many questions as they have answered. It has been our goal to bring together many of the insights from these often contradictory studies in a way that helps to frame the questions that we must pursue. We have organized this review in terms of what believe to be the principal components of a comprehensive approach to studying the impact of mass media.

Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff (1987) argue forcefully for the indeterminancy of an essential cause. Each process and relationship within a social system is in some way linked with, influencing, and being influenced

those links. The task of theorists is to be as comprehensive as is possible in describing those relationships. This task begins with identifying conceptual points of entry. From our perspective, no theory of media effects can ignore the economic and political environment which is involved in regulating the production and distribution of media images. At the same time, exposure to and interpretation of those images is conditioned and regulated by the cultural, subcultural and personal experiences which forge the differences between us. Thus, in the pages that follow we will discuss the representations of Blacks and Hispanics in the context of the changing media environments which produce them. We will examine the evidence of media effects in the context of socially generated individual and group differences .   And we will suggest areas where we belive additional research is warranted.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MASS MEDIA

Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1985) offers a sociological perspective which focuses on the micro and macro level determinants of media dependencies which may provide some insight into the social origins of the particular patterns and orientations we find within Black and Hispanic populations. Her study is unique among mainstream analyses in that it includes historical patterns and structural relationships between mass media and other social systems in which Blacks and Hispanics organize their lives. Thus, Ball-Rokeach argues that individuals are dependent upon the mass media as their basic link to the economic and political system (p. 491). It is important therefore, to examine the political and economic structure of the mass media environment in order to develop some insights into the ways Hispanic and Black dependencies develop and change in time.

Hegemony

The theory of hegemony has been identified with Antonio Gramsci's (1983) attempt to explain the conformity of the Italian working class to the ideology of the dominant classes. Critical researchers in the US have borrowed from Gramsci's concept to argue that television is the primary vehicle through which subordinate groups are taught dominant values and philosophy (Gitlin, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Hall (1979) maintains that the mass media have

colonized the cultural and ideological sphere of society. The main purpose of the mass media, from Hall's perspective, is to provide the audience with the raw materials from which they may construct an image of the "lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes" (p. 140). The media rank and arrange these images as preferred meanings and interpretations which reproduce and extend the dominant ideology.

Gitlin (1979) focuses our attention on television as the primary instrument of cultural hegemony which does not in his view create ideology, but instead selects, reproduces, processes and packages it in ways which are accepted as normal or natural. For Gitlin, hegemony is "leaky", constantly changing in order to remain hegemonic. Hegemony is seen as a dynamic process which grows and changes and maintains its power through its domestication and absorption of oppositional elements of subordinate cultures. Thus, Gitlin argues that Black television sitcoms become available when there is a market-driven recognition of a growing Black consuming class, at the same time that such programs remain acceptable as comedy to the White mainstream.

Not all hegemony theorists accept the notion of ruling class domination of the cultural sphere as is implied in Gitlin's analysis of television. Kellner (1979) argues that within the television text there remains the possibility for differential individual decoding of the message, at the same time suggesting that because of their overall concern with profitability, capitalist media managers will broadcast oppositional messages if there are sufficiently large audiences for them. Such an emancipatory outcome is unlikely, however, as in reality, messages which directly challenge the core beliefs about good and evil in society, would be rejected by the mainstream audience as abnormal, radical "fringe" television.

The Market

Félix Gutiérrez has been a vital source in the conceptualization of the nature of Spanish-language media, and he, along with Jorge Schement(1976) have developed detailed explications of a model of internal colonialism to describe that environment. Later, Gutiérrez (1980) provided an overview of the Latino-media relationship in the US which reveals similarities and differences in the media histories of Hispanics and Blacks. The mainstream media are seen to provide a similar variety of negative, stereotyped images for

both Latinos and Blacks, and they tend to present Latino reality in the news from a middle class, Anglo perspective. Like the Black press, there is a long history of Spanish Language newspapers dating back to the early 1800s. However, unlike the Black experience in broadcasting, where White owners of Black oriented stations hired Blacks as personalities, the White owners of Spanish language stations depended upon Latin American professionals rather than upon local Latinos, and much of the recorded music was imported from Latin America as well. Gutiérrez notes that The Spanish International Network (SIN) was controlled by a Mexican corporation (Televisa), and served as a lucrative mechanism to tap the television export marke: in the US.

Because of the growth, both in terms of size, and in wealth, of the Spanish speaking population, the competition for access to that audience has become fierce. Advertisers are reported to spend between $100-180 million annually to reach the Hispanic market which is estimated to have had aggregate household income in excess of $157 billion in 1986(Besas,1987; Fitch, 1987). The potential value of this growing market is such that the 25 year dominance of Televisa, and the position of Latino "mom and pop" broadcasters is severely threatened by well financed, White venture capitalists. Saul Steinberg's Reliance Capital Group formed the Telemundo Group, which, anchored by a dominant broadcasting and production facility in Puerto Rico, and supported by successful stations in Los Angeles and Miami, reported plans to develop a group of at least 10 owned and operated stations in the largest Hispanic markets (Spadoni, 1987; Besas,1987). Evidence of the growing importance of the Hispanic market may also be seen in the purchase of 10 stations, formerly controlled by SIN by Hallmark Cards, and the new trend of simultaneous release of Spanish-dubbed, first run threatrical films(Walley,1987).

Wilson and Gutiérrez (1985) call our attention to the emergence of this audience segmentation and targeting which parallels the growth in the size and importance of Black and Hispanic populations. The Telemundo group, because it has such a strong Puerto Rican base, has been relatively sucessful in the East Coast markets, but has done less well in the southwest because the population there shares a Mexican cultural heritage(Besas,1987). It reported efforts to develop more culturally representative programming material, either from Lain American sources, or from domestic production. Such

specialization may increase the influence of the domestic Hispanic creative community over the construction of Latino media images.

Marketers have also come to believe that Blacks and Hispanics respond differently from mainstream audiences to commercial appeals, and they have begun to utilize racial or ethnic advertising firms and specialized media channels to reach these populations more effectively. SAMI (Selling Areas Marketing Inc.), a subsidiary of Time, Inc., promotes itself as the only agency providing continuous monitoring of the purchases by Black and Hispanic consumers . By 1984, segmentation had become so specialized within the magazine field, that there was a periodical, Odyssey West, which was "directed toward blacks in the Rocky Mountain states" (Freeman, 1984).

Protests and ethnic group activism

While the economic interests of advertisers and investors are the dominant forces determining the structure and content of mainstream and ethnic targeted media, there is some evidence that organized social protest, by threatening the economic well being of media outlets, has also been influential in changing the portrayals of Hispanics and Blacks.

Published studies of ethnic group activism are relatively rare within the literature. Surlin (1977) examined factors which would predict the degree of "involvement" with local radio stations. In addition to race and class measures, Surlin added an additional index of fatalism, alienation, or belief that one was unable to control ones' own destiny. The relation between race and involvement was determined to be spurious due to the superior influence of education, which was lower in the Black population studied.

Schement, et al (1977) provided a critical case history of Chicano involvement in challenges of television station licenses in the early 1970s, as a special case of the more comprehensive study of the Chicano movement by Francesco Lewels. Wilson and Gutiérrez (1985) provide an informative chapter on the history of Black, Hispanic, Asian and other ethnic group advocacy for improved treatment in the media in the US. They are able to identify some progress in the area of hiring of minorities, especially in broadcasting, where the threat of the ultimate sanction from the FCC, puts weight behind the demands of activists.

Roland (1982) provided something of a post-mortem for the "broadcast reform movement" but he tended to frame the movement in terms of a general progressive, reformist political orientation, rather than as the product of ethnic self-interest in media images.

Minority participation

Part of the approach of ethnic group media activists has been to push for greater participation by Blacks and Hispanics in creative decision-making positions where utlimate control over ethnic images is exercised. Nolan Bowie(1984) argued that a reason for being concerned about Black participation in the production of news, information and entertainment content can be based on a concern for First Amendment rights, as well as for the more general concern with the "marketplace of ideas", or the essential public debate necessary for the -operation of a democracy(p. 2). If Black people are not in positions of authority, their voice is absent from the debate, or others, less capable may have the responsibility to speak on their behalf.

Racial or ethnic participation at entry and management levels in newspapers is well below parity, and participation in broadcasting reached a peak, and has begun a decline, with White women making more substantial, and apparently sustained progress in the industry.   Current analyses of the problems of increasing Black and Hispanic participation in the media workforce suggest that the problems go beyond the resistance of the industry to a complex system of forces within the "pipeline" leading to the first media job (Trayes, 1987). Dwight Ellis, Vice President for Minority and Special Services of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) reports that while images and repre~entations in television prorams and commercials has improved, racial or ethnic group producers have been responsible for less than one percent of the network programs (1987).

Racial or ethnic group media activists were also largely responsible for focusing regulatory attention upon the small share of broadcast properties under the direct financial control of Blacks and Hispanics. In 1978, ten years after the publication of the Kerner Commission Report, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued its special task force report Minority Ownership in Broadcasting (1978). It shares the view of Bowie related to the need for diversity in a democratic society. "Minorities should be

fairly represented in the broadcast industry of a society which mandates an unrestricted flow of diverse ideas and equal opportunity for all. Diversity of ideas and viewpoints is vital to a free society"(summary, p.1). At that time, the report noted, "Despite the fact that minorities constitute approximately 20 percent of the population, they control fewer than one percent of the 8500 commercial radio and television stations currently operating in this country" (Introduction, p.1) On the basis of the recommendations of the Task Force, and other suggestions from the advocacy community, several key initiatives were taken within the Commission to increase racial or ethnic group ownership. These include EEO policy, racial or ethnic group preferences in comparative hearings, tax certificates and distress sales relief for the sale of properties to groups with substantial racial or ethnic group participation. Since the issuance of the racial or ethnic group ownership report, 75 tax certificates had been issued for the sale of broadcast facilities to Blacks and 23 for sales to Hispanics. However, as noted by Johnson (1987, masters thesis, Howard University)and Honig (1983), a great many economic, social and political obstacles still remain.

Principal among these obstacles are those related to the overal political economy of media markets. Because of the substantial rquirements for capital, cable system ownership by racial or ethnic group entrepreneurs has been limited to ten (Ellis, 1987). As part of the fallout from the FCC's "free market" deregulatory stance, and specifically because of their relaxation of their multiple ownership rules, the prices of major market properties have escalated to historic levels. Blacks and Hispanics have insufficient capital to acquire stations in major markets, and because they have limited experience in broadcasting, they have great difficulty in identifying lenders willing to risk large sums for a broacasting venture. Racial or ethnic group venture capital organizations have been criticised for making excessive cash flow demands upon stations...demands which are difficult to meet in the face of continuing advertiser resistance to making "ethnic buys."

Some critics suggest that the only reliable source of advertising revenue for Black media are the firms which are targeting their alcohol ads to the Black market (Hacker, Collins and Jacobson, 1987). They note that "one consequence of these heavy advertising expenditures has been the

unwillingness of revenue-dependent black publications to report on risks associated with alcohol use and abuse" (p. xv).

Because of these market constraints, one may wonder, along with Muriel Cantor (1978), whether it really makes any difference if Blacks and Hispanics own or control broadcast media outlets. This question has been addressed by very few studies (Fife, 1986; Schement and Singleton, 1981; Singleton, 1981). Singleton seems to feel that providing specialized programming is a responsibility that racial or ethnic group broadcasters should not be expected to bear to any greater extent than do majority group broadcasters. Singleton ignores much broadcasting history in that special allocations of frequencies to educational broadcasters did come with the expectation that they would provide an alternative or ancillary service. A similar logic might apply with egard to those Blacks or Hispanics who received brodcast properlies at a special discount, although, the rules of the marketplace would still mean that theywould be condemned to a marginal existence.

Fife's work is exemplary in that it demonstrates significant differences between Black, Hispanic and mainstream broadcasters, and suggests further that because of the nature of competition in urban markets, racial or ethnic group broadcasters may serve as positive role models for other broadcasters, thereby increasing/improving racial or ethnic group treatment in the news (1986).

The Future of African-American and Hispanic Representations

With multiplication of media channels available in any household through broadcast, cable, disc and tape distribution systems, there is an expectation that audiences for particular programs may become increasingly homogeneous. Shoemaker, Reese and Danielson (1985) report that where Spanish language television is available to them, less than 40% of the Hispanics surveyed indicate that they do not view it. And while there are clearly income barriers which keep many Blacks and Hispanics from enjoying the abundance of the new media, race itself does not appear to be a predictor of which families are likely to adopt the newer information technologies (Oates, Ghorpade and Brown, 1986).

Valdez (1985) reflects the same kind of optimism about the potential benefits of emerging information technology which Webster and Robins

(1986) describe as having captured the spirits of futurists of the Right and the Left. For Valdez, the only question is whether or not "Latino entrepreneurs recognize the opportunities in this industry" for innovation, investment, and the creation of a viable Latino market (p. 11.) It is Gutiérrez (1985) who calls for caution, suggesting that "the obvious applications [of technology] are quickly appropriated and tested by the giants. To the extent that Latinos participate in these efforts they will either be employees or consumers" (p. 112). The role that Hispanics will play in controlling the production of racial or ethnic group images in the future is as yet unclear.

TELEVISION CONTENT: THE STIMULUS EXPLORED

Television content, as the product of the media system, and the presumed determinant of social perceptions is the principal focus of research and writing on minorities and media. Social scientists and activists have long expressed a concern that the pervasive nature of racism in television content may influence the way that viewers organize their thoughts and behavior regarding race and ethnicity. Berry (1982) expressed that concern:

> The continued transmission of faulty racial attitudes and
> ideas can only reinforce the racist legacy and cause our
> institutions to maintain their retardative force on the humane
> growth and development of all of its citizens (p. 225).

Thus we find that concern about Black images and later about those of other minorities in television derived not from aesthetic considerations of form, genre and style, but from social and political concerns that the medium would contribute to the further entrenchment of social inequalty and discrimination This has influenced the way minority images have been studied.

We examined some of the major theoretical assumptions and beliefs about Black and Hispanic content withn the context of three methodological approaches. These include empirical content analysis, the popular culture, or literary critique and critical qualitative analysis . We focused our study on the images of the 1980s because these contemporary representations represent a

significant shift in the demography, social structuring, and ultimately, in the
ideological impact of that content (MacDonald, 1983). Our focus on stars, or
leading roles, unfortunately ignores the potential for identifying meaningful
differences between foreground, and background representations of Black
and Hispanic reality. Readers may acquire a more complete history of Black
and Hispanic television images in some of the following: Barcus, 1983,
MacDonald, (1983), U.S. Civil Rights Commission (1977), Gerbner and
Signorielli(1977), Signorielli (1982), and Greenberg, et al (1980).

Quantitative Content Analysis

Who are the Blacks and Hispanics who populate the world of commercial
television in the 1980s? African-Americans are very often found in the
reruns of series from an earlier deade such as The Jeffersons, What's
Happening, Different Strokes, et al. These programs have been dubbed "the
New Minstrelsy" by Macdonald (1983), but they remain popular with Black
audiences, and are presented in c :dy strips five times weekly, in a way that
supports the habitual viewing by the fringe audiences of independent
stations. The new programs developed in the 1980s featured the successful
middle class: The Cosby Show, 227, Amen, Webster, Benson, Frank's Place, et al.
as well as several Black supporting actors in the Facts of Life, Head of the
Class, Rags to Riches, Miami Vice, Night Court, et al.

Quantitative content analyses in the past focused on demography,
behavior and interactions, linguistic styles, dress, violence, social status and
settings as indicators of Black and Hispanic existence and progress. Nearly all
of these studies were published by 1982 (Greenberg, 1986), perhaps
representing an end of an era of researcher interest, financial support, or
journal acceptiveness to headcounts unsupported by any deeper theoretical
insight.

Analyses of minority images frequently begins with comparisons of
television demography with that of the reality captured in official statistics.
The demand for inclusion of minorities in a manner proportionate to their
share of the population has been expressed politically by media activists, as
well   minority actors and other media professionals. Hispanics may te
that   ks nearly achieved representational parity at around 10% in
1   representation in the television world lagged far behind.

Although the Hispanic population is expected to exceed that of African-Americans by the end of this century, there are few signs to suggest that their presence will be reflected on television. Presumed barriers of language, divergent cultural history and social experience may retard the growth of the Hispanic population in the world of mainstream television.

Greenberg and Fernandez-Collado (1980) identified 53 Hispanic characters on network television between 1975-1978. The Latina had a miniscule presence, outnumbered by males, five to one. Fantasy Island and CHIPS featured Latino male stars, but were not primarily about Hispanic life. a.k.a. Pablo, a controversial series which did present a version of Hispanic life, was set in a Los Angeles barrio, but enjoyed a very short run, as did Condo, a Latino version of The Jeffersons.

In the 1980s, identifiable Hispanic charaters are few and far between (Barcus, 1983; Wilson and Gutierrez, 1985), and frequently involve negative roles as criminals involved in the drug trade, or recall the traditional stereotype of the Latin lover. While one might applaud L.A.Law for casting one Hispanic character as a successful attorney, and I Married Dora for costarring a Latina (as a maid who marries her boss), the rest of the television landscape in the Fall, 1987 season was the familiar territory of drugs and crime (Stewart, 1987). Unless there is a dramatic change in the way Hispanics are portrayed by mainstream television, Latinos may be better off without parity. Very few Hispanic characters have had vehicles which survived from one season to the next. This is in sharp contrast to the vehicles in which Black actors played roles in the most popular shows of their season. The limited success of Hispanic charaters may provide some insight into the kind of location Hispanics and Latin culture shares in mainstream popular culture .

Signorielli (1981) states that it is from aggregate patterns of casting, characterization and fate that meaning is derived from television programs. Values are distributed among characters hierarchicaly according to social status and power.She defined underrepresentation more broadly to include "restricted scope of action, stereotyped roles, diminished life chances, and undervaluation" (p. 99). In the past, minorities were very much underrepresented in the sense if lacking proportionate share of representation. At the same time, the characters which were presented were

unidimensional, therefore lacking a proportionate representation of their human qualities. Black representations have changed through increased portrayal of middle class life styles, but this has meant a decline in portrayals of the full range of Black social locations. Quantitative analysts must be challenged to link the demographic comparisons to indices of ethnic and racial authenticity.

The popular culture critique

Popular culture researchers view television as a "cultural force"(Newcomb and Hirsh, 1983), and resist its categorization as an instrument of class and cultural hegmony (Kaminsky and Mahan,1985). Indeed, the popular culture approach usually avoids political issues, including racism, generally concluding that such analyses are irrelevant to the study of cultural forms (Seiter, 1986). From their perspective, television serves the cultural function of storytelling in society. It is art, myth and ritual constructed from familiar content, contexts, and themes, and is structured to generate a popular discourse acceptable to a mass audience. The popular culture critque is employed to provide a meaningful approach for understanding the "vast majority of television content and its durability as a form of entertainment" (Kamisky and Mahan, 1985). Unfortunately, the popular cultural approach has not been applied in any systematic way to the study of Black and Hispanic images. The Humanities Index identifies precious few studies between 1980-87 about Blacks , and none about Hispanics in prime time US television.

Reeves (1983) offers one attempt to link a Black Fictional character (Mr. T) to the Black subculture. He attributes Mr. T's great popularity among Black audiences to his similarity to Mohammed Ali, a familiar cultural hero. The two men share the same "cultural space" with a contradictory discourse that is sometimes radical, sometimes mainstream. And while on the one hand, Mr T. seems to resurrect the discredited "ethnic fool" with his wild hairstyle and slave chains, his phenomenal mechanical skills and physical strength elevate him to the level of a hero. Reeves argues that if you look beyond Mr. T's outlandish appearance, he is very much like the respectable characters portrayed by Bill Cosby in I Spy, and Greg Morrison in Mission Impossible. Both were cast as highly talented specialists, accepted as equals within all-White teams prone to violent heroic action.

Reeve's critique offers some useful insights into one type of television character, but not all Black (or Latino) characters are heroic. The issue of racism is largely ignored, as Greenberg and Baptista-Fernandez (1980) observed. Black characters on television rarely discuss racism or race relations. Setting may account for some of the blindness with regard to racial interactions. Blacks have historically been excluded from television programs situated in the South, with the notable exception of miniseries such as Roots and Roots II (McGee, 1983). Until the Fall, 1987 season, and the scheduling of A Different World, and Frank's Place, most series featuring Blacks were set in northern cities or Los Angeles. In the cultural mythology of television, the South was a trivialized setting full of bumbling but lovable "good ole boys" as in the Dukes of Hazzard, or the Andy Griffith Show. The presence and history of African-Americans in the South has been symbolically annihilated, leaving the issue of race as a dimension solely of urbanized urban ghetto life.

Intercultural relations were addressed somewhat more directly with regard to the interactions between Latinos and Anglos in the West. In Condo, another of the short-lived series featuring Latino characters, the question of assimilation was addressed directly. A condominium serves as the setting where a Latino family moving up the economic ladder, becomes neighbors to an Anglo family recently faced with economic hard times. Subervi-Velez (1987, p. 14) suggests that the "program carried a general message that Latinos can be upwardly mobile, relate to Anglo neighbors, and still retain aspects of their own culture."

Critical Qualititative Analysis

Critical researchers have focused on analysis of dominant political meanings and symbols in minority television content. This emphasis reflects their general critique of television as a corporate, commercial enterprise which serves both the financial and ideological interests of its owners(Shoemaker, 1987). Consistent with this analysis is the assumption that television content is developed primarily for consumption by Whites. Thus, Gray (1986) quotes NBC executive Perry Lafferty as saying, "I think the mass audience likes to see Blacks in roles that are not threatening" (p. 223). The mass audience, despite the fact that Blacks spend more time in that role than do Whites, is composed primarily of White consumers. In the past, as Wilson

and Gutiérrez (1985) remind us, "movie producers capitalized on audience insecurities by using minority stereotypes to bolster their [White viewers'] self-esteem and reinforce racial attitudes" such that "virtually every minority characterization was designed to reinforce the 'tude of White superiority" (p. 65). Too often, critical researchers approach contemporary media decisionmaking about minority images on the basis of similar assumptions about symbolic functions.

Gerbner(1978), Matabane (1982) and others have argued that television content changes in accordance with broader dominant political agendas. In his analysis of the various stages minority images have gone through, Clark (1969) theorized that Black images would pass through a law enforcement phase into an era of racially transparent roles. He did not mean the return of "Pinky" and other light skinned Blacks trying to "pass for White", but as Greenberg and Fernandez-Collado (1980) have suggested, the blending of minority roles into

"the fabric of media messages in both minority-related and
non-minority contexts and situations. The characters develop
broader dimensions and are not as differentiated from the
roles given to majority ethnics" (p.3).

The recent proliferation of programs featuring minorities in integrated settings validates these predictions. And, in that light, we would argue that the symbolic function of the images of racial and ethnic groups described by Wilson and Gutiérrez (1985) has been modified in the 1980s. Bill Cosby's Dr. Huxtable cannot easily meet the needs of racists in search of self-esteem.

Gray (1986) suggests that the Black characters cast in professional roles and in upscale White settings express "preferred and acceptable white upper middle class definitions of racial interaction" (p. 229). For Gray, the competence, articulateness and attractiveness of these characters make them models of assimilation. Their blackness ʒ muted behind professionalism and racial invisibility. Other circumstances of Black life are not presented in these scenarios.

Mark Miller (1986) suggests that there is another commercial purpose behind the integration of Blacks into prime time. Miller argues that television programs are commercial vehicles for the consumer mentality, in the

background, context, and the story lines of the programs just as much, if not more than in the commercial minutes themselves. With The Cosby Show as the ultimate commercial vehicle, Miller notes: "Cliff Huxtable and his dependents are not only fashionably comfortable and mild, but also noticeably black. Cliff's blackness serves an affirmative purpose within the ad that is The Cosby Show. At the center of this ample tableau, Cliff is himself an ad, implicitly proclaiming the fairness of the American system: "Look!" he shows us. "Even I can have all this!"(p210).

Miller sees Cosby's character along with the nonthreatening Blacks of 'Strokes and Webster as playing a necessary reassuring role for White Americans. "By and large, American whites need such reassurance because they are now further removed than ever, both spatially and psychologically, from the masses of the black poor"(p. 214). Miller's latter assertion, however, needs greater specification as to which sectors of White America are so thoroughly alienated from Black America. Is is also necessary to understand if alienated middle class Blacks may also feel isolated from poor Blacks and thus these programs may serve similar symbolic functions for them.

THE IMPACT OF MINORITY PORTRAYALS

The research community has consistently sought to raise questions about the impact of negative images of Blacks and Hispanics on the aspirations, expectations and beliefs of minorities (Stroman, 1984). Implicit in this concern is the belief that members of racial and ethnic minorities exposed repeatedly to such portrayals will develop negative self images, and will underestimate their life chances in society, and as a result, will lower their aspirations and expectations thereby guaranteeing their own continued oppression.

Behavioral evidence

From a behavioral perspective, we arrive at such an effect through a complex chain of personal choices involving exposure to particular stimuli or content. It is differences in the content, and the context of exposure which account for the observed differences between people where other individual differences have been controlled through randomization or statistical

partition. The primary weaknesses of the behavioral paradigm are two-fold. First, under tightly controlled experimental conditions, we may have great confidence in our causal analyses of the single case, but may know very little about the generation of these effects in the natural environment.

Second, in the case of ex-post facto investigational or other non-experimental designs, our confidence in the causal interpretation is weakened critically by a lack of random assignment to comparable exposures to content. This is revealed most graphically in the virtual impossibilty of analysts to determine whether the social perceptions influenced the exposure to television fare, or whether the exposure to television produced the social perceptions. Attempts to remove social experience statistically from the relationship between viewing and social perceptions frequently reduce the strength of the primary correlationto a non-significant level.   And, because the estimates of explained variance(R-squared) in most studies are so low, it is clear that the empirical models are poorly specified, and include only a small proportion of the relevant influences.

McLeod and Reeves (MCRY#2, 1981) provide a detailed review of the complex of competing and complementary influences upon which media effects depend. It is a rare study that recognizes, let alone attempts to measure or control for the multiple sources of variance in audience response. This is not meant to be a blanket criticism of behavioral research, but a recognition of the seemingly insurmountable epistemological barriers such an approach sets in its cwn path.

McLeod and Reeves argue that in order to develop a scientific understanding of mass media impact, we need "knowledge of the stimulus material, control of its application, assessment of effect, and an understanding of the mechanism or process underlying the effects"(p. 255), and in order to acce plish this, we must meet the following requirements.

First, we must specify the media content, or stimulus. It is not always clear that the content as perceived by the analyst is the same as the content perceived by the audience. Gunter (1987,) suggests that this is the essential weakness in the work of tne Gerbner's Cultural Indicators team . The objective description of content produced by trained coders may bear no relationship whatsover to the content which different (untrained) audiences might

receive. In addition, the manifest, surface content which is more easily specified, may also be unrelated to the more essentially ideological content which serves to frame media representations of Black and Hispanic realities, and may operate more powerfully in structuring their social perceptions.

Second, we must control the exposure of the audience to the content. In the laboratory, control of exposure is relatively less troublesome than in the natural environment where individuals exercize greater choice based on their tastes and preferences for different media content. Because of this, we have little confidence that exposure to the stimulus is at all comparable within, or between non-experimental studies. "Television viewing" itself has been recognized as a complex theoretical construct which has been operationalized in numerous ways, with considerable measurement error. A variety of personal and contextual factors will influence the amount of attention viewers pay to the content of television. Garramone (1985) demonstrates that individual's motivations regarding political information will infuence their attention to different editorial formats within the general category of television news. Many of those factors also influence how much of the content is actually understood, or received. In their study of what White children learn from exposure to Black portrayals on television, Atkin, Greenberg and McDermott (1983) determined that what mattered was not the portrayals the youngsters were exposed to, but what they thought they had seen. And what they thought they were shown might have been influenced by what they brought with them to the screen, or what might have occured in the context of their exposure. Most of these these influences are beyond the direct control of behavioral researchers.

Third, we must specify, and then measure or assess the effect of exposure to media content. Again the problems are both conceptual and methodological. Effects which are conceived of as being group, cultural, or aggregate, are too often measured at the individual level. Because effects at the interpersonal and institutional/societal levels are too difficult to measure, they tend to be ignored. Complex relational understandings, or the products of "sense making" by active audiences are frequently limited by opinion survey instrumentation to positions along agree/disagree continua, or worse, to yes or no responses (Morley,1980, p31).

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Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, we must "elaborate the conditional processes that help interpret and specify the relationship"(p.256). Here, we are concerned with those "third variables" which intevene in the theoretical path between exposure and effect. The conditional processes together form the achilles heel of behavioral social science which is rarely shielded by the cloaking magical incantation..."ceteris parebus."

Differences in Exposure

Subcultural experience and social location as sources of differentiation

The impact of unique or repeated exposure to television portrayals is conditioned in part by the orientations that individuals bring to the experience.   David Morley(1980), in an attempt to find a workable compromise between the search for media effects and the search for the meanings of media content, sought to discover the role that concrete, but shared social experience plays in determining how one decodes a message with ideologically "preferred readings" imposed upon it. In his analysis, it becomes important to identify what are the "structural conditions which generate different cultural and ideological competencies" (p19). Although he studied Blacks in Britian who were primarily from the West Indies, the observed differences in their decoding of television's preferred message underscored the importance of subcultural, as well as class influences on message processing.

What people choose to view, and how well they attend to its message is conditioned in part by the confidence they have in the source. McLeod and O'Keefe (1972) studied audience preferences and credibility assessments as the products of a socialization process. Over time people learn which media they like and trust, and for the media they prefer, they come to know which formats, programs, or personalities are more likely to meet their needs for information or entertainment. These orientations develop and change in response to changes in a persons' "life cycle" or age, which operate in addition to the generally more influential social and structural constraints of race and class. Unfortunately, much recent research in this area tends to utilize race and class as social categories, rather than as purposefully selected

indexes of particular shared socializing experiences, thus we have little more than speculation about the conditions that contribute to the development of different media orientations.

Ball-Rokeach(1985) argues that one's location in the social structure is likely to influence one's media orientations or dependencies, and such differences mediate the impact of any media exposure. For her, structural location "inclues all the conventional stratification variables, such as class, status, and power," but she suggests further that we should not "limit our concerns to structural locations that bear on political and economic matters"(p.505). Our needs for, and structural limitations upon our access to alternatives for play or recreation, also influence our media dependencies. A number of studies have sought to describe how race, sex and class are related to different media orientations and patterns of media dependency of Hispanics and African-Americans.

Richard Allen (1981) argues that the reported differences between Blacks and others in the relationship between television viewing and class is largely due to problems of measurement and design. Where other studies reported that the relationship between viewing and class was not inverse for Blacks as it was for Whites, Allen finds no such differences. He cites an earlier study (Allen and Bielby, 1979) which found viewing to decline as one moved up the class ladder. However, in this study Allen and Bielby utilized a measure of perceived social class, rather than the traditional indices of education and employment. We note as well that Gerbner, et al (1982) suggest that television viewing _itself_ may produce distortions in personal assessments of class location. Among Whites studied, heavy television users who were objectively members of the lower class, were more likely to identify themselves as members of the middle class. Of course, it is not clear that such patterns would be repeated in a Black sample.

Age, education and income were used to examine differences in African-Americans' assesments of the performance and credibility of local Black and White television newscasters. Elizabeth Johnson (1984) reports that Blacks tended to see Black reporters as more attractive, and more believable than the Whites presented to them, although Whites were more likely to be seen as

"better performers." In this study, demographic factors were associated only with differences in attractiveness ratings.

Education as a predictor of media use patterns continues to be revealed in studies focused primarily on effects rather than on patterns of use. Allen and Hatchett (1986) report that Blacks who are younger, have less education, and who report parental training specifically related to race were more likely to view Black-oriented television. When comparing Blacks, Whites and Jews, Gandy and ElWaylly (1986) reported that Blacks were more dependent on television as a source of information about the Middle Eastern conflict, and they suggested that dependence upon television was conditioned by the lower levels of education which Black respondents had acquired.

A comprehensive review of the literature on Blacks and television was provided by Poindexter and Stroman in 1981. They offered a number of summary propositions about the nature of Black uses, tastes and preferences in television fare. Constrained perhaps by what was available in the contemporary literature they avoided any explicit discussion of social structural factors which might explain patterns of media behavior among Blacks. Indeed, they recommended the elimination of traditional demographic variables, in favor of social psychological variables as a way of discovering "what is it about being black or young or poor which makes the television experience unique" (p. 120).

Valenzuela (1981) provides a review of Latino television use in the context of a study of Latinos and public television, and concludes the evidence is mixed about whether Latinos view more television than the general population. O'Guinn, Faber and Meyer (1985) reported that the differences between Mexican-Americans who preferred Spanish-Language television and those who preferred English, can largely be reduced to indices of social class, and degree of acculturation.

The most comprehensive study of Latino media orientations was produced to assist the Gannett corporation in their attempt to reach the large and growing Latino population. This study(Greenberg, et al, 1983) focused on Mexican-Americans as the largest subgroup of Hispanics in the US. Again, we find discussion of the substantial cross-generational differences in media use patterns among Latinos, where the older groups were more likely to identify

themselves as Mexicans, and to prefer Spanish language media (p20). Youngsters that viewed Spanish language television reportedly did so because their family was watching, rather than as a matter of personal choice. Television is seen to provide for the same "open window" or social learning needs of Latinos as it provides for Blacks and others who have limited options as a result of poverty or racism. Hispanics in this study tended to be more satisfied with all of their media than Anglos, and were more likely to see television portrayals as realistic.

Allen and Clarke (1980) argued that little research into the media behaviors of different ethnic groups 'focused on the historical, cultural, and political antecendants that may distinguish these groups" (p23). Subervi-Velez (1986) addresses this problem as well in his discussion of ethnicity.

Francisco Lewels (1981) examined Mexican-American attitudes toward the mass media. This analysis differs from much of the research which seeks to compare racial and ethnic groups, in that it sought to understand the role that background differences might play in the development of the various perspectives that Mexican-Americans hold toward media. This study utilized a Q-analysis of responses from 36 respondents, twelve of whom were media professionals. Five person-types are identified and discussed in a way that reveals considerable diversity among Mexican-Americans. Socialization as media professionals appears to have played a significant role in producing similar views among those respondents with mass media linkages. Lewels suggests that while there are important differences, there is a critical thread which runs through each of the identifiable attitude segments--"a deep-seated distrust of the media (particularly large corporations) and a suspicion that racial or ethnic interests are not their prime concern"(p. 27).

Ethnic Identification as a source

Pamela Shoemaker (1985) questions what communications researchers really have in mind when they study "ethnicity." She suggests that all too often they have conceived of ethnicity in terms of deviance, or difference from the patterns of the White, or dominant culture. Keefe and Padilla (1987) pursued the construct in a study of Chicanos in Southern California. Ethnicity was seen to have objective and subjective dimensions. Factor analysis of the subjective aspects of ethnicity identified distinct components identified as

"cultural awareness" and "ethnic loyalty", and these factors were differentially associated with objective indicators such as generation, education, barrio residence, occupation, and rural background.

Berry and Mitchell-Kernan (1982) suggest that "ethnic identity is associated with patterns of experience that exhibit significant common denominators from the perspective of socialization. These shape the manner in which the socialization potential of television is realized" (p8). The difficulty in establishing a causal relationship between cultural or ethnic identity and media orientations is based in the recognition that the relationship is non-recursive. While ethnic identification can influence media choice, media exposure will also potentially influence ethnic identification. Allen and Hatchett(1986) offered three measures of Black self-identification , mainstream, non-mainstream and Black separatist. All were positively correlated with exposure to Black-oriented television, although the strongest correlation was with mainstream Black group identification. However, the theoretical posture of the researchers was that these racial orientations were the products , rather than the causes of television exposure.

Kimberly Neuendorf (1982) examined the relationships between self-designations for Anglos and Hispanic youngsters, and media exposure, preference and evaluation variables. Hispanics could identify themselves as being Latino, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Mexican, Spanish-American or Mexican-American. The hyphenated Hispanics were expected to be more assimilated, or Americanized than other Hispanics. In this study of five southwestern US cities, among Hispanic youngsters choosing a single label for themselves, Mexican-American was the most popular (41%), followed by Spanish-American (20%), Chicano(19%), and Mexican (18%). While self-designated Chicanos and Mexican-Americans were similiar in their media tastes and preferences, Spanish-Americans were nearly indistinguishable from non-Hispanics in terms of their tastes. There was also substantial support for the hypothesis that the selection of an Americanized self identification would be linked with avoidance of ethnic media. Here again, there is evidence of more demonstrably "ethnic" audiences using the media for social learning or advice.

Racial Attitudes as a factor

Jannette Dates(1980) examined viewing, evaluation and identification with Black television characters by Black and White teenagers. Television characters were evaluated with an index reflecting mean ratings of semantic differential scales. Racial attitudes were measured with an index derived from the Multifactor Racial Attitude Inventory (MRAI). Consistent with earlier findings (Frank and Greenberg, 1980), Black viewing levels for programs with Black characters were higher than those of Whites, and there were no significant differences fₐ the general-audience programs. Similarly, Blacks evaluated Black characters more positively, were more likely to identify with them, and were more likely to rate them as realistic than were their White classmates. Racial attitudes were found to be less reliable predictors of attitudes toward television characters. Dates' discussion includes the possibility that those with negative attitudes toward Blacks might avoid many of those programs with Black characters, and thereby have less strongly developed impressions of them.

Racial attitudes were found to be reliable predictors in another study, however. Debora Heflin (1981), utilized a continuous measure of ethnicity, or racial orientation(the Developmental Inventory of Black Consciousnes), to explain differences in evaluations of television commercials. Black subjects gave the highest ratings, and exhibited greater recall for commercials with Black models, but those with the lowest level of Black consciousness were likely to give more favorable ratings of the White commercials than were those with higher levels of Black consciousness. It should be noted, however, that the distribution of scores on the Black consciousness inventory were not independent of age, education, or marital status, which suggests that life stage factors may be substantially involved in both consciousness and orientations to media content. In a recent, unpublished study, Allen, Dawson and Johnson (1987) offer a general model of "black racial identity," and identify several antecedents to the development of those beliefs. Location in the social structure and religious activity are important influences on this belief system. Television is again identified as an influence on racial beliefs, which are themselves components of a person's racial identity.

Perspectives on selectivity

From the functionalist perspective of "uses and gratifications", Lee and Brown (1981) explored the behavior of Black children, teenagers and adul.s, primarily to identify the motivations which guide their media activity. Utilizing the dataset developed by Frank and Greenberg (1980), Willis Smith (1985) sought to determine if differences in needs for personal identification, learning or diversion might be useful in predicting Black preferences for television program types. Contrary to his expectations, he found that the traditional demographic indicators of sex, age, education and occupation were more important predictors of tastes in television program fare.

Fairchild, Stockard and Bowman (1986) offered a re-analysis of a 1981 survey of African-Americans which asked respondents to recall viewing Roots, their reasons for viewing and their impressions of the series. The overwhelming majority of Blacks surveyed viewed some of the series, and nearly all were pleased with it. Where the differences emerged were in the things they liked most about the series. The somewhat circular reasoning of the uses and gratifications perspective (Elliot, 1974), and some contemporary studies of television viewers (Barwise and Ehrenberg, forthcoming) would suggest that there are strong correlations between what viewers say they found and what they initially sought in the program.

Ronald Simmons (1987) utilizing an educational cognitive style inventory, successfully predicted the preferences of Black college students for a variety of popular television programs. The selection of particular cognitive styles was based on the assumption that individuals preferred programs which provided content with attributes that they found easier, or more enjoyable to process.

Federico Subervi-Velez (1986) has provided a more recent review of the literature on Hispanics, with a particular focus on the role of the media in the assimilation of Hispanics into mainstream American culture. He notes that ethnic media may serve as "shields" against the acculturating/assimilationist influence of mainstream media, at the same time that they might provide guidance to newcomers which aids their immersion into a new culture. Presuming the operation of conscious, and purposive choice of media, the overwhelming conclusion to be drawn about the use of ethnic media is that it

is used to maintain, or even strengthen ones' ethnic identification, thereby tempering the influence of other forces of acculturation.

Pia Nicolini (1986) examined Puerto Rican leaders' peceptions of Spanish-Language media. This study of media available in Philadelphia found general satisfaction with the news coverage provided by the Spanish International Network (SIN) station, especially coverage of Latin America. However, because the SIN station is a network outlet, with no local production capability, it did not represent an alternative to local television as a souce of information, or as a way for leaders to reach local audiences.

Numerous studies have examined racial or ethnic use of media for public affairs information. Active participation in political activities is thought to stimulate use of mass media. Tan (1981) argued that political participation predicts media use for both Blacks and Mexican-Americans. He suggested that political activists may believe that others expect them to be well informed, and this expectation serves as a motivation for media exposure. The reported data support that argument, although they do not falsify the alternative that media exposure produces interest and involvement. Tan also notes that the model is stronger for Whites than for either Mexican-Americans or Blacks. In a later analysis of this data, Tan (1983) divided his ethnic populations into two groups on the basis of their educational attainment, and utilized political participation as the criterion variable in a regression model. In this analysis, media use was unrelated to political participation for Blacks or Mexican-Americans once other predictors were in the equation.

Correlations reported by St-George and Robinson-Weber (1983) suggest that political participation is more strongly associated with the desire to view political content on television for Blacks than for Whites. Gandy and Coleman (1986) reported that Black college students felt that the news media treated Jesse Jackson unfairly, and their dissatisfaction with media coverage grew throughout the life of the campaign. Somewhat paradoxically, their reported use of television also increased over the same period. Gandy and Coleman offer as a possible explanation for this contradiction, the suggestion that students used television selectively, relying more on Jackson's unmediated performance in the debates, than upon journalists intrepretations of what Jackson had done. In a later study, Matabane, Gandy and Omachonu (1987)

report that Black college students generally viewed television news more frequently than they read newspapers, and felt that television was the most useful source of information about the South African Conflict. Students who were more involved in issues tended to rely more on newspapers than on television for information about the conflict.

In 1976, Blacks were no more or less likely to have viewed public television than was the total population (National Analysts, 1981). However, because they expected greater Black interest in Africa, Matabane and Gandy (forthcoming) believed that Blacks would be more likely to have viewed the controversial PBS series, The Africans than Whites. The data from their small sample of supporters of a Black PBS affiliate suggested that Blacks were somewhat more likely than Whites to have viewed any segment of the series, but being Black was unrelated to the number of episodes viewed.

In Sum

When we examine the literature of Hispanic and African-American orientations to mass media in general, and to television in particular, we are forced to conclude that we have only a partial inventory of differences, and a bare minimum of understanding about those factors which produce them.

Hispanics may be drawn to Spanish-language television because they are more familiar with and comfortable decoding messages in Spanish. This interpretation would also explain the marked age differences in revealed preferences for Spanish-language media where older Hispanics might be less comfortable with English. However, with the increased immigration of Latinos from Mexico and Central America, the relationship between age and preference for Spanish may be weakened.

Several studies underscore the importance of cultural differences within Black and Hispanic populations. Country of origin explains some of the differences in tastes and preferences of Hispanics, while demographic or social location variables are more useful in explaining differences in Black consciousness which is reflected in different orientations toward media.

Despite the criticisms of activists and intellectuals, Black and Hispanic viewers are heavy users of television, and they tend to ascribe substantial credibility to it as a source of information about economic, and political matters. However, because of the non-local production base of the industry,

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Spanish-language television is seen as less useful than mainstream media for information about day to day influences in the lives of Hispanics, which thereby increases their dependence upon Anglo media. Berry (1982) suggests that "systematic research is needed to identify why there seems to be this apparent acceptance of inaccurate or negative portrayals, and how this audience acceptance may function as a creative source for certain portrayals" (p. 53).

DIFFERENCES IN OUTCOMES

As Greenberg (1986) has indicated, the number of studies which attempt to apply the behavioral science model to the study of media effects on minorities is distressingly small.   The kinds of outcomes which might be explored include media orientations, knowledge, attitudes and behavior, evaluations of themselves in comparison with others, and evaluations of the social and economic system in which they live.   While Greenberg cites not a single study, Poindexter and Stroman's 30 year retrospective was able to cite several studies of what social roles and behaviors Black children learned from television. They noted as well the major contribution of Stuart Surlin's studies of learning from the Norman Lear television series, and from Roots (which stimulated the greatest surge of interest in media and race to date).

Surprisingly, the historic presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson produced only a handful of effects-oriented studies (Gandy and Coleman, 1986). With regard to learning from television, Gandy and El Waylly (1985), and Gandy, Matabane and Omachonu (1987) suggest that Blacks are handicapped by their reliance on television for public affairs information.   To the extent that studies of the relationships between media use and the knowledge can be conceived as a societal level effect, although measured at the level of individual, Gandy and El Waylly(1985) demonstrate that reliance on television contributes to the substantial gap between Blacks and others in terms of public affairs knowledge.

Gandy and Coleman (1986) determined that television news exposure was more important than newspaper use in predicting Black student perceptions of the Jesse Jackson campaign, espcially with regard to aspects of candidate

character and style, although not with regard to knowledge of a candidate's stance on issues.

Surette (1985) examines the link between media use and preferences for social policy. If the mass media generate a sense of a mean world, over-run with violent criminals, it should follow that an acceptance of a more punitive criminal justice policy would be cultivated among the heavier users of television. Although race is dichotomized as White or non-White, it is likely that this Dade County Florida sample had a majority of Blacks and Hispanics in the non-White category. Surette reports that Whites, especially those who favor crime-oriented television drama, were more supportive of a more punitive policy. Indeed, race was the most reliable discriminator between supporters of liberal or punitive policies. Amount of exposure to television in general was not a significant discriminator.

The majority of the effects studies reported which link any outcomes to Hispanic media use are those studies which evaluate the learning gains of children associated with viewing specialized public television series, some of which had specific social learning goals (Greenberg, et al, 1983; LaRose and Eisenstock, 1981). A few studies, such as Gombeski, et al. (1980), evaluated the effectiveness of televised Spanish language public service announcements in informing and motivating Hispanics to motify their health behavior.

The Cultivation of social perceptions

The Cultivation Hypothesis

The Cultivation Hypothesis (Gerbner, et al) relates the common and recurring patterns of events and outcomes in television content to the social perceptions of individuals. As a television-specific formulation of social learning theory, the cultivation hypothesis simply argues that the more one is exposed to a particular constuction of reality, the more one will come to perceive that reality in similar terms. Through message system (content) analysis, Gerbner and his associates have identified stable, recurring patterns of violence, with classifications of minorities and women as violents and victims, with different opportunities, resources and outcomes. Exposure to this content is thought to cultivate the "dominant tendencies of our culture's beliefs, ideologies and world views" (1980, p. 14). Cultivation is said to produce

an indirect effect on viewers which develops cumulatively through repeated exposure, rather than in response to exposure to any particular program.

The Cultivation Perspective has several simplifying assumptions which have been subject to repeated criticism, and empirical challenge(Good, 1984; Hawkins and Pingree, 1982; Rubin, et al, 1987). The first is that the television message is largely invariant with regard to the underlying cultural message. Thus, the second assumption emerges that it matters not what you view, only how much you view. The third, which serves to reinforce the prior two, suggests that audiences are relatively non-selective about what they view, such that even if there were differences in television content across genre, heavy viewers would see more of everything.

The Cultivation Hypothesis has been tested empirically in a number of studies, including 48 reviewed by Hawkins and Pingree (1982), and more recent critiques by Potter (1986) and Perse (1986). Mainstream criticisms of cultivation have focused on the hegemonic perspective underlying it and the basic methodological weakness in its use of cross-sectional suvey data to measure indirect, cumulative effects (Hirsh, 1981; Hughes, 1980; Newcomb, 1978).

The Cultivation Hypothesis has rarely been concerned with the effect of television use by Blacks or Hispanics, except when their responses have proven to be contrary to theoretical expectations. However, Richard Allen, who has been a primary source of studies of Black media use, has offered a sophisticated test of television effects (Allen and Hatchett, 1986) which further extends the reach of cultivation analysis to Blacks. Allen and Hatchett suggest that background and social structural variables play a more powerful role in the development of social perceptions among B'-cks, but exposure to Black-oriented television programs affected each of their dependent measures of social reality. Matabane (1985) differs from Allen and Hatchett in that the mainstreaming design she employs explicitly assumes an influence of objective social experience, whereas they include social reality as an equal partner in the prediction model. The two studies are not directly comparable because of markedly different operationalizations of social experience, and exposure to Black-oriented programming.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming means the process through which we find "the sharing of the commonality among heavy viewers in those demographic groups whose light viewers hold divergent views" (Gerbner, et al., 1980, p. 15). Television plays a vital role in the forging of social consensus through mainstreaming. Groups which are out of the mainstream by virtue of their holding extreme positions reflective of their objective social experiences, are brought inside, through their repeated exposure to televisions' constant messages.   The incremental effect of television may be quite subtle as members of racial and ethnic minority groups may hold a mixture of social values, some dominant, some representing negotiated positions, and some representing radical, oppositional views (Parkin, 1971). While African-Americans and Hispanics clearly share many dominant values about certain aspects of contemporary society, on many other dimensions, there are clearly identifiable differences between Blacks and Whites(Rokeach, 1973). Matabane (1985) offers an explicit test of mainstreaming among Blacks, finds strong support for the hypothesis that socially determined differences in social perception are eliminated through common exposure to television.

THE ROAD AHEAD

It is not enough to say that there is a need for more research on all the fronts we have explored in our search for insight. We seek to understand the place of television, the most pervasive of all communication media, in the lives of its Black and Hispanic audiences, because we are concerned with the role communication plays in shaping their understanding of the world. Understanding the world, both the threats and the opportunities that present themselves is an essential part of communications competence(Gandy, 1987). It is only when we understand the world, from our own perspectives, and from the perspectives of others, that we are able to act in our own interests to change that world.

It is clear that a variety of factors combine to ensure that many Hispanics and African-Americans are severely constrained in their efforts to construct genuinely useful, comprehensive images of social reality.   A market-

dominated communication and information system undersupplies content which meets the needs of minority subcultures. Like left-handers, who are always forced to adapt to a right-handed world, members of racial and ethnic subcultures have come to rely on information systems that are always awkward to use, but must be used anyway because there are no readily available alternatives. Thus, we find that older, and newly immigrated Hispanics who rely on Spanish-language television, actually consume exports from the larger markets of Mexico, Brazil and Puerto Rico, and find very little television content which speaks in their own language about their present circumstances.

Black and Hispanic youngsters, who continue to utilize television as a window on the world of experience beyond the ghetto or barrio, find a grossly distorted reflection of that world, and their place in it. And, as dependency theory suggests, for those without alternative sources of information about things with which they are concerned, media sources become increasingly influential.

We have noted that the media marketplace is changing, in part in response to dramatic changes in the demography of the nation's urban areas. Wilson and Gutiérrez(1985) have suggested that we are moving toward an end of mass media, toward diversified, narrowly targeted media channels. What they have not concluded is whether or not Blacks and Hispanics will be any better off as that occurs. Gandy and Simmons (1986), on the other hand, offer a critical, less sanguine view of the future of isolated, homogeneous audiences. They suggest that narrowcasting increases the potential for more efficient, purposeful manipulation of social consciousness.

We are certain of the power of television. We are not disuaded by the inherent weakness of behavioral research, or the narrow vision of its practitioners which somehow misapprehends its essence. We are challenged by its complexity and dynamism, and we are committed to following its twists and turns in order to describe it as it changes shape and form.

While we have matured sufficiently in our perspective to recognize that the power of television is realized through the differential filters of concrete social experience, we cannot forget that much of that experience is structurally conditioned, and flows through the conduits of race and class.

And, as Camarillo (1984) suggests, "given the parallels that exist between the urban experiences of blacks and Chicanos, it is important that scholars study these two groups in comparative perspective. Any analysis of the history of race relations as well as class relations cannot be fully explained without equal attention paid to both groups" (p. 1). Insight into the nature of shared experiences of urban segregation, employment discrimination, and educational abandonment will assist our analysis of Black and Hispanic media dependency.

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